

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIEP-03 AID-20 DPW-01 IO-14

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SCS-03 SCA-01

OPR-02 SY-04 CU-05 EUR-25 NIC-01 DRC-01 /171 W

----- 067540

R 301113Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9156

INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: MINOR DEMONSTRATIONS; GOVERNMENT MOVING TO MEET

CRITICISMS

1. AFTER CONSIDERABLE HUFFING AND PUFFING BY ANTI-CORRUPTION
AND FREE PRESS MOVEMENT FIGURES, THREATENING MAJOR DEMONSTRATIONS
IN SAIGON OVER WEEK END, SEVERAL MINOR INCIDENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE
IN PAST FEW DAYS IN SAIGON AND IN MR 2.

2. ON SEPT 28 IN A CHURCH NEAR CAM RANH, FR. TRAN HUU THANH
PREACHED A SERMON AND GAVE AN ANTI-CORRUPTION ADDRESS ATTENDED BY
ABOUT 500 PERSONS. ON SEPT 29 FR. THANH AGAIN ADDRESSED THE
SUBJECT OF ANTI-CORRUPTION, THIS TIME AT THE CATHEDRAL IN NHA
TRANG BEFORE AN AUDIENCE OF ABOUT 2,000. IN BOTH CASES, THE
MEETING WAS CONFINED TO CHURCH PREMISES, AND IN NEITHER WAS THERE
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ANY VIOLENCE. THE MEETINGS WERE ATTENDED BY SOME NON-CATHOLICS,

AND THE AUDIENCE, AT LEAST AT CAM RANH, INCLUDED DEPUTY TRAN VAN TUYEN AND OTHER FIGURES PROMINENT IN THE RECENT AGITATIONS.

3. AT ABOUT NINE A.M. ON SEPT 29, APPROXIMATELY 100 PEOPLE CARRYING BANNERS MARCHED TO THE CENTRAL SAIGON MARKET AREA. AMONG THE DEMONSTRATORS WERE OPPOSITION DEPUTIES, CATHOLIC PRIESTS (REPORTEDLY FROM "THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS MOVEMENT), BUDDHIST MONKS, AND A NUMBER OF PEOPLE SAID TO BE FOLLOWERS OF MME. NGO BA THANH. THE DEMONSTRATORS CARRIED BANNERS WHOSE SLOGANS ATTACKED PRESIDENT THIEU. DURING THE GATHERING, SEVERAL OPPOSITION DEPUTIES MADE SPEECHES DENOUNCING PRESIDENT THIEU. THE SPEAKERS WERE INTERRUPTED BY SCUFFLES BETWEEN POLICE AND SOME OF THE DEMONSTRATORS AS THE POLICE TRIED TO TAKE THE BANNERS AWAY FROM THE PROTESTERS. THE DEMONSTRATORS THEN SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS. THE MAJORITY REMAINED AT THE MARKET. ABOUT TWENTY MARCHED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING ON LAM SON SQUARE. BY ABOUT TEN A.M. BOTH SETS OF DEMONSTRATORS HAD ENDED THEIR PROTEST. NO ARRESTS WERE MADE.

4. A MINI DEMONSTRATION NUMBERING ABOUT TWENTY PERSONS UNDER THE THEME OF "RELEASE POLITICAL PRISONERS" TOOK PLACE THE FOLLOWING MONDAY MORNING, SEPT 30, NEAR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING AND WAS EXTENSIVELY COVERED BY THE PRESS. CBS CORRESPONDENT HOWELL AND THE AP BUREAU CHEIF REPORT TO US THAT HOWELL WAS KICKED IN THE KIDNEY BY POLICE AFTER AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO CONFISCATE FILM HE HAD SHOT OF THIS "DEMONSTRATION". (GVN AUTHORITIES ARE SOMEWHAT EXASPERATED BY THE TENDENCY OF FOREIGN MEDIA TO REPRESENT VERY MINOR EVENTS STAGED BY SMALL GROUPS OF KNOWN DISSIDENTS AS MAJOR POPULAR MASS PROTESTS. WELL KNOWN PRACTICE FOR THESE GROUPS IS TO ALERT SELECTED PRESS REPS IN ADVANCE OF INTENT TO STAGE DEMONSTRATION AND THEN TRY TO PROVOKE INCIDENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRESS AND CAMERAMEN.) AP INFORMS GVN SPOKESMAN CUONG OFFERED PROMPT REGRETS AND SAID STEPS WOULD BE TAKEN TO AVOID SUCH INCIDENTS IN FUTURE.

5. IN GENERAL, GVN CROWD CONTROL MEASURES HAVE BEEN QUITE RESTRAINED. VN PRESS ON SEPT 28 REPORTS GVN SPOKESMAN NGUYEN QUOC CUONG TO EFFECT NON-VIOLENT ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES WOULD BE TOLERATED BUT WARNING AUTHORITIES HAVE DUTY PREVENT CONFIDENTIAL

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VIOLENT ACTS LIKELY ENDANGER PUBLIC SECURITY AND AID ENEMY.

6. AT THE SAME TIME THAT DEMONSTRATIONS SEEM TO BE RUNNING LOW ON STEAM THERE ARE SIGNS THE GOVERNMENT MAY BE MOVING TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION. ON SEPT 28, AT CONFUCIUS DAY CEREMONIES AND COUCHED IN PHILOSOPHIC TERMS, VICE PRESIDENT HUNG CALLED FOR A LIMITATION OF ACTIONS HARMFUL TO SOCIAL STABILITY, POINTED TO CONFUCIUS' PREFERENCE FOR REFORM OVER REVOLUTION

AND APPEALED TO ALL TO SEEK SOLUTIONS FOR CONFLICTS IN
TOLERANCE IN ORDER TO BUILD UNITY OF EFFORT AGAINST
THE ENEMY AND IN THE NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION. WE ARE TOLD BY
LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER NGUYEN BA CAN THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL
BE CONVENED OCT 7 AND GOVERNMENT MEMBERS WILL INTRODUCE AMEND-
MENTS TO DECREE LAWS 007/72 (PRESS) AND 060/72 (POLITICAL PARTIES).
AMENDMENTS TO LATTER WOULD BE DESIGNED TO ALLOW "THREE OR FOUR"
PARTIES PARTICIPATE IN 1975 ELECTIONS. SUCH AMENDMENTS
WOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY. MININFO HOANG DUC NHA HAS CONFIRMED
SEPARATELY GOVERNMENT INTENT AMEND DL-007.

7. GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED PRESIDENT THIEU WILL ADDRESS NATION
TUESDAY, OCT 1 AND GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS MAY BECOME CLEARER
AT THAT TIME.

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